

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, October 24, 2000

The House met at 10:30 a.m.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Cheek, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3679. An act to provide for the minting of commemorative coins to support the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games and the programs of the United States Olympic Committee.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 898. An act designating certain land in the San Isabel National Forest in the State of Colorado as the "Spanish Peaks Wilderness".

H.R. 2884. An act to extend energy conservation programs under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act through fiscal year 2003.

H.R. 3023. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to convey property to the Greater Yuma Port Authority of Yuma County, Arizona, for use as an international port of entry.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 150) "An Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey National Forest System lands for use for educational purposes, and for other purposes", with amendment.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 154. Concurrent resolution to acknowledge and salute the contributions of coin collectors.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 835) "An Act to encourage the restoration of estuary habitat through more efficient project financing and enhanced coordination of Federal and non-Federal restoration programs, and for other purposes".

The message also announced that the Senate disagrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 2796) "An Act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors

of the United States, and for other purposes," and agrees to a conference asked by the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. WARNER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRAHAM, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

## MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

REPUBLICAN	CONGRESS	HAS
WORKED	TIRELESSLY	FOR
AMERICA		

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, in this pivotal election, the American people will hear a lot of back and forth about who works harder for their country. Shakespeare wrote, "What's past is prologue." And I believe no other phrase can quite describe both the achievements of the Republican Congress and its vision for America's future.

In 1995 when Republicans took over here in the House of Representatives, one of the first orders of business for the new Republican majority was to declare that it was going to comply and be bound by the same laws with which all Americans are forced to comply.

We reformed the bloated, inefficient welfare system which held captive many Americans who only wanted a better life for their families. Providing a welfare-to-work incentive for both individuals and businesses, the Republican-led Congress succeeded in dropping the welfare rolls to the lowest level in history. Congress extended health insurance under the Medicaid program for millions of uninsured children, giving them the proper care and attention that they deserve. The Republicans passed health insurance portability to guarantee working Americans that if they switched jobs or lost their jobs, they could continue with

their current health coverage. We reformed the Food and Drug Administration, giving people quicker access to lifesaving drugs and medical devices and providing for better food quality.

The Republican Congress enhanced criminal penalties for sexual crimes against children and established a nationwide tracking system for sexual predators. We also enhanced punishment for drug-induced rape. We boosted education by increasing funding and giving local school districts and States the flexibility to use Federal funds to best meet the needs of children.

For seniors, Mr. Speaker, we passed legislation ending the Social Security earnings limit test which unfairly penalized senior citizens for simply trying to make a living. The House also voted to roll back the 1993 Clinton-Gore tax on Social Security benefits.

We passed legislation to repeal the marriage penalty tax and the estate tax here. Sadly and unfortunately, the President vetoed both our bills and chose to turn his back on millions of Americans. We strengthened our national defense by increasing military pay and retirement benefits, enhancing health care benefits for veterans, providing the care and respect for our military which this administration has misused and forsaken.

And let us not forget the budget, Mr. Speaker. The Republicans passed the Balanced Budget Act and bound our appropriations bills to spending caps. The Nation's checkbook is in the black and we have paid down the debt by nearly \$270 billion.

I would like to point out that the Democrats controlled the White House, the Senate and the House, right here in the 103d Congress. Instead of protecting Social Security, Medicare and providing for prescription drugs, the Democrats succeeded in increasing the Social Security tax on seniors, increasing the tax on gasoline, and increasing the overall tax burden on Americans. At the same time, the Democrats squandered the Social Security surplus. Before 1995, when Republicans took over here, the Democrats spent billions of dollars of the Social Security surplus as if it was a slush fund for Members of Congress.

The Republicans, in sharp contrast, have chosen to lock the Social Security surplus away, making it untouchable for anything except Social Security. Last month, the House passed the debt relief lockbox which will continue our pledge to protect 100 percent of both Social Security and Medicare

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

while providing for \$240 billion in debt reduction.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Republican Congress has worked tirelessly for the American people. We have produced real solutions here in Congress. We have fought hard and passed legislation on welfare reform, better health care, better education, tougher criminal penalties, tax relief, a stronger defense, a balanced budget, debt reduction, and Social Security protection.

We will not hear that, Mr. Speaker, from the folks on the other side. They refuse to state or admit the facts. They are afraid that the American people will see the truth, so I thought I would come on the floor this morning to set the record straight on the accomplishments of the Republican-led Congress.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for that introduction.

This represents the bleak future of Social Security. Because of the substantial tax increase on American workers, the FICA tax increase in 1983, there is now more money coming into Social Security than is needed to pay out benefits. And again a reminder that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go program. Current workers pay in their tax and it is almost immediately sent out to current beneficiaries.

Because of the tax increase in 1983, an extra surplus is coming in from the higher tax. After 2015, we go into a bleak future of somehow coming up with the funding necessary to pay benefits.

Let me just comment on this short term surplus. During this surplus over the next 10 years, there is going to be \$7.8 trillion. I know this gets into statistics but bear with me. In the next 10 years, there is going to be \$7.8 trillion coming into the Social Security; \$5.4 trillion is going to be used to pay benefits. That leaves a surplus over the next 10 years in Social Security of \$2.4 trillion.

Governor Bush has suggested that we take \$1 trillion out of that \$2.4 trillion and use it as a transition to set up personal retirement savings accounts. Unlike the Vice President, he is not using the same trillion twice. What he does is take \$1 trillion out of the \$2.4 trillion surplus. Benefits are already going to be paid. There is \$2.4 trillion left over.

In contrast, the Vice President has suggested that we increase spending over the next 10 years by \$2.3 trillion. So he is using that extra money to increase spending. I think in terms of the

implication for our kids and our grandkids, it is much better to start solving the Social Security problem than expanding government and making these huge promises of increased spending.

Let me comment briefly on the Vice President's suggestion for saving Social Security. He is suggesting that if we use this extra money coming in in surplus, on- and off-budget a 2nd time we can pay down the debt held by the public. That is \$3.4 trillion. Again the total debt, what we owe Social Security plus the other trust funds combined with the \$3.4 trillion, amounts to a \$5.6 trillion debt that we are going to leave our kids if we do not start paying it down.

So everybody agrees, let us start paying the \$3.4 trillion of debt held by the public, down. But the Vice President is suggesting that somehow paying this \$3.4 trillion down and the savings of the interest that we are paying on this amount, to about \$260 billion a year, it is going to accommodate the shortfall of \$46.6 trillion between now and 2057.

Let me say that again. Mr. GORE is suggesting that if we pay off this \$3.4 trillion, the interest savings is \$260 billion a year. I think it is reasonable to say, start using that \$260 billion a year saving to apply to the shortfall in Social Security. The blue line at the bottom represents the \$260 billion a year. But what is left of the shortfall even if we have the guts, if we have the intestinal fortitude to use all that interest savings and apply it to Social Security, there is still a shortfall of \$35 trillion.

It is fuzzy math. It does not work. It is a tremendous disappointment to me. I have been chairman of the bipartisan task force on Social Security in this Chamber. It is a disappointment that in the last 8 years we have not moved ahead to solve Social Security. Because the longer we wait, the longer we put off a decision to fix Social Security more drastic the solution is going to have to be.

We failed in the last 8 years to move ahead on that proposal because of the lack of leadership coming out of the White House.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 44 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God of mercy and compassion, You oppose the proud-hearted and are attentive to the lowly.

It is better for us to humble ourselves before You than for us to be humiliated by others, or by events, or even by our own weakness. With all humility we place ourselves and our destiny in Your almighty hands.

May this proud and powerful Nation stand before You today in truth. May reflection on our history lead us to gratitude and repentance. May the present restlessness of the world, the issues placed before this Nation, and the responsibilities of this Congress bring us to honest dependence upon You, our Source of Wisdom, Patience and Judgment now and forever. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELP KEEP THE CAPITOL OF THE UNITED STATES FUNCTIONING

(Mr. PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am retiring from the House after 21 years of service, and I want to take this opportunity to do something that I and all of us should do, and that is to thank the other people that make this House, this great institution, work.

We thank our staffs and we thank the people who work here in the Chamber, but I want to talk about the people who run the elevators; about Bonnie and Andre, and Shelly and Wendy, and John and Sheila and Sylvia, and so many more that put up with us day after day. The people who run the restaurant, the House restaurant, Sally and John and Miss Vickie, and many more. The Capitol police, who protect us with their lives. The people who run the trains, the people who clean the offices in the Capitol and keep it beautiful for ourselves and for all of the